



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Become a caregiver for children who are no longer safe in their home.
- Information on how to become a foster parent is available at:  
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/index.asp>
- If you are currently a caregiver, contact your child's social worker regarding available resources, information and support.
- If you are an unlicensed caregiver, contact your child's social worker and they will provide you with contact information for the Division of Licensed Resources to discuss the steps to becoming a Licensed Caregiver.

**The Resource Family Training Institute** provides training for licensed and unlicensed caregivers. Caregivers of dependent children, kinship families, unlicensed caregivers and licensed caregivers are welcome to attend classes provided statewide by the Resource Family Training Institute, free of charge.

### Classes and Videos are available at:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

**The Family Resource Lending Library** offers books, tapes, and other training materials for Washington state foster parents and kinship providers to check out. The materials will be mailed to you in a re-usable pouch with all postage pre-paid by DSHS for the return of the materials.

- This service is free to all Kinship Caregivers and Foster Parents in Washington State.  
Call: 1-877-517-0820 or  
Email: [walibrary@nwresource.org](mailto:walibrary@nwresource.org)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS AND MAINTAINING SIBLING CONNECTIONS

### Why is it important for siblings to live together in out-of-home care?

- When a child can no longer remain safely at home due to abuse or neglect, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services seeks to place the child in a safe nurturing home.
- Three out of four children in custody have at least one brother or sister. Unfortunately brothers and sisters are not always able to stay together in one home.
- To be separated from siblings causes an additional loss to these children. Being with their brothers and sisters helps children feel safer and offers some sense of stability.
- Siblings form a child's first peer group and children learn social skills, particularly in managing conflict, from negotiating with brothers and sisters.
- Sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity throughout a child's lifetime and are likely to be the longest relationships that most people experience.
- Being with siblings can enhance the child's sense of safety and wellbeing. They are not wondering where their siblings are and whether they are safe.
- Brothers and sisters deserve a chance to grow up together in a safe, loving home. Perhaps your home? Could that home be yours?
- You can help bridge this gap by becoming a Licensed Caregiver.

### Research regarding siblings in out-of-home care:

- Of 588,000 children in foster care in the United States, 55%-69% have siblings.<sup>1</sup>
- Percentage of children placed in foster care with ALL siblings.<sup>1</sup>
  - ✓ 2 children – 54%
  - ✓ 3 children – 38.7%
  - ✓ 4 children – 27.1%
  - ✓ 5 children – 17%
  - ✓ 6 + children – 11.2 %

<sup>1</sup> Statistics on Siblings in Out of Home Care update 2010. Casey Family Programs.

- Research suggests that: Siblings are more likely to remain in first placement without disruption if they are placed together.<sup>2</sup>
- If siblings are not placed together initially, chance of reunion in permanent placement is greatly diminished.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Sources: Staff, I. & Fein, E./CASCW Practice Notes, Fall 2000

### References:

- The importance of siblings,  
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/siblingissues/siblingissues2.ctm>
- Benefits of placing siblings together.  
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/siblingissues/siblingissues4.cfm>